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Amendments to the Specification:

Page 2, third full paragraph, replace with the following paragraph:

Fiber optic network systems have been used widely in the area of communications. Their applications include: (1) a long-haul telecommunication systems on land and at see sea, such as ocean-spanning submarine cables and national backbone networks, to carry digitized signals simultaneously over a long distance; (2) interoffice trunks that carry many telephone conversations simultaneously between local and regional telephone switching facilities; (3) connections to Internet service providers; and (4) local-area networks.

Page 7, first full paragraph, replace with the following paragraph:

Additional features and advantages of the invention will be set forth in the description, which follows, and in part will be apparent from the description, or may be learned by practice of the invention. The objectives and other advantages of the invention will be realized and attained by the structure particularly pointed out in the written description and claims hereof as well as the appended drawings.

Page 24, first full paragraph, replace with the following paragraph:

A preference value is used to designate certain routes as preferred routes. A network operator typically sets preference values. A distributing station may maintain a preference value table. A preference value table, for example, may contain a list of preferred routes. At step 1203, a distributing station then gives a preference value of one to those optimal route candidates listed in the preference table and zero to those that are not listed. Alternatively, a preference table may contain a preference value for each route segment and a preference value

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of an optimal route candidate may be defined as a sum of preference values of its route segments. Then at step 1203, a distributing station calculates preference values for each cash optimal route candidate by adding preference values of its route segments.